

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Examiner's Action dated January 19, 2007. Applicants have amended the claims to (a) incorporate features of allowable dependent claims into their respective independent claims and (b) rewrite other conditionally-allowed dependent claims in independent form. No new matter has been added, and the amendments place all claims in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments to the claims. The discussion provided below reference the claims in their amended form.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

At paragraph 5 of the Office Action, Claims 2-3, 10-11, 13-14 and 21-22 are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form incorporating all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicant has incorporated subject matter from several of the above dependent claims (which are now canceled) into their respective independent claims. Applicants have also rewritten the other conditionally-allowed dependent claims in independent form including any intervening claims, where applicable. The various amendments remove the conditions placed on the allowable claims and also place each independent claim (and its dependent claims) in condition for allowance. Applicants therefore request Examiner remove the conditionality of the allowance and extend the allowance to cover all pending claims.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

In the present Office Action, Claims 1, 4-9, 12, 15-20 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *McKay et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,138,247) in view of *Morikawa* (U.S. Patent No. 5,898,829). As stated above, Applicants have incorporated allowable subject matter into each independent claim. The amendment overcomes the present 103 rejection of the above listed claims and places these claims in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have diligently responded to the Office Action by incorporating allowable subject matter into each independent claim and rewriting allowable dependent claims in independent form. The amendments overcome the § 103 rejection and places all claims in condition for allowance. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request issuance of a Notice of Allowance for all claims now pending.

Applicants further respectfully request the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney of record at 512.343.6116 if such would further or expedite the prosecution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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